

May 2009

Professor Joanna D Haigh
Head of Department
& Professor of Atmospheric Physics

Head of Department's Statement of Support

Along with the senior management, I am fully committed to providing an environment which supports all members of the department and encourages them to reach their full potential. Thus I give my strongest endorsement to this application.

I was appointed Head of Department in January 2009 and was already aware that significant progress had been made with initiatives that arose directly from the SWAN, as well as the Institute of Physics Juno Code of Practice.

My immediate predecessor Professor Donal Bradley established the departmental Juno committee and enthusiastically signed up the Department as a Juno supporter in 2008. His predecessor, Professor Sir Peter Knight, initiated several actions including a more explicit monitoring of UG and PG gender statistics following the IoP visit in 2005. Peter continued to champion progress when, in his position as Faculty Principal, he appointed Prof Lesley Cohen as the Faculty Ambassador for Academic Women. Lesley's appointment has had far-reaching effect both within the department and more widely in the college. In particular she has vastly improved the management / reporting structure all the way to the highest levels.

We have done a significant amount of work to improve our processes and procedures, focussing on transparency, consultation of all staff and responding as effectively as possible to problem areas where they are identified.

I would like to highlight two key actions that have already made an enormous difference. The Juno Committee launched a Departmental staff survey in late 2008 that attracted a healthy response and has produced a wealth of information.

I was pleased to be able to present to all staff in February an initial analysis of the results which identified positive areas, and also issues that needed attention, relating to the rather different concerns of each category of staff.

Results from the survey have already informed our strategies and action plan; further analysis is ongoing. One swiftly implemented outcome was the establishment of a Departmental RA Committee which has been actively involved in departmental decision-making and is already recognised as a great success by both the RAs and senior management.

Our commitment has also been recognised in the wider community. As one of first university physics departments to be actively working towards Juno, we were invited by the IoP to speak at a 2008 Juno workshop and, as a result, invited to go and talk to the Oxford physics department about our activities in this area.

The effort of working for SWAN recognition and Juno championship status has enabled us to identify where further actions are needed, helped further by the visit of the IoP panel on 5th May which provided a helpful perspective. We have used these experiences to inform the construction of our action plan and will be embedding the initiatives stated within it into the management and academic structure of the Department. I look forward, over the coming months and years, to ensuring that the initiatives are fully implemented.

With best wishes

